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Embattled Professor Bids Mississippi Farewell

By DORIS E. BROWN

"Hell, I like it here," 58-year-old Dr. James Wesley Silver told a newspaper reporter several years ago, when asked why he remained in Mississippi.

The courageous, liberal professor of history from the University of Mississippi, who long stood up against segregation in that racist state, last week verified the report that he's finally pulling out of the South, where he's lived since he was 12.

"I guess I knew when I started this I would not last forever. You can't buck a monolithic society," said Silver, who is teaching a graduate course in Southern history at the summer session on the Rutgers University campus here.

On Leave

Silver is on leave from Ole Miss at the moment, but he has no intention of returning to those classrooms where he had taught for 29 years.

"I've not resigned. But I'm going to resign during the year," he stated. He's not sure yet of the date that he'll resign, because, he explained, "I have been having a feud with the board."

Silver will go to Notre Dame to teach in September and will become a permanent member of the faculty there. He will take a leave from Notre Dame



BLAMES NATION TOO — "These people in New Jersey and elsewhere, who put all the blame on Mississippi for having nullified the Constitution, forget that Mississippi got away with this because the United States not only tolerated, but cooperated. What I'm saying is that the nation has the responsibility, not only Mississippi," accuses Dr. James Wesley Silver at Rutgers University.

in the spring to teach a semester at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Cigar-smoking, scholarly Silver, who surprisingly speaks without a trace of contagious drawl, said last week, "I'm tired. I've been tired for three years."

No Smiles Left

And when asked to smile for his photograph, he told the photographer, "I haven't got anything to smile about."

But his leaving Ole Miss campus doesn't mean he's pulled out of the fight, any more than his explosive valedictory address as president before the Southern Historical Association in November, 1963, meant that Silver was saying farewell to the Civil Rights cause.

This highly respected American historian himself has helped to make history. Yet he maintains the disciplined scholar's approach and despite his strong feelings and opposition to segregation doesn't let his emotions run away with him.

His classic study, "Mississippi: The Closed Society," published last year, is an expansion of his address before his Southern colleagues.

This comprehensive and stunning indictment of white supremacy in that stronghold of racism has aroused Americans

on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. In the North, his book is almost universally praised, while in the South and most particularly in Mississippi it is just as thoroughly damned.

"In Mississippi: The Closed Society," asserted Harrison E. Salisbury in a New York Times book review, Silver "cuts through the passions and legends of today's crisis and lays bare the origins of the canker eating out the heart of Mississippi."

"Yet his book is no apocryphal dissertation from an academic white tower. The author has been in the thick of the fight. He was on the campus the night-long during the insurrection over James Meredith's admission and he became Meredith's friend and admirer," stressed

the review.

Continues Battle

Silver has been battling "the closed society" in constant lecture engagements throughout the country during the past year, too. Just last Thursday night, he spoke on the Rutgers campus.

As soon as the summer session ends here in mid-August, Silver will concentrate on updating his book. He already is deep in research and plans to spend about a month writing a new chapter on what has happened in the past 15 months for a new edition due next winter.

Silver is almost the last of the liberals to leave "the closed society," a totalitarian way of life that's painfully similar to that in Germany, Italy and Russia during the days of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin.

"The majority of my friends at the University of Mississippi have left since 1962," he said.

"I know about 50 people who have been driven from the state one way or another in the last several years—educators, business people, churchmen. In the book itself, I tell about the Methodists. Somebody estimated that about 100 young

Methodists were driven out in the last 10 years. I don't question this."

Moves to Front

Segregationists have been hounding him, he said, "since 1938." But his own move to the forefront of the Civil Rights fight didn't come until much later.

"The point is, you don't do these things all of a sudden. You make a little move and then another," he explained.

Silver made his big decision to sit down and be counted when James Meredith, the first Negro student, came to the campus of Ole Miss.

"I guess I crossed the line," he said, "when I determined to sit down and eat with Meredith in public. No one else had."

Rebel Views Dixie

"There was no need for violence as long as segregation was maintained."

"There is a real revolution there. I think Mississippi is undergoing more change than any other area of the country. There are two reasons: One, they had so far to go; two, it is being imposed from outside."

"I anticipate no big trouble in Mississippi this summer. I've said all along there would not be."

"I said in my book, the only way Mississippi can be changed is through massive federal intervention. That is also happening."

"In the last two weeks, at least six or eight school systems have been ordered to integrate by the courts. I'd say there have been at least six systems ordered integrated in four grades in the last 10 days."

"I would guess there will be several thousand Negroes in white schools this fall. Out in the country it may cause trouble, not in the cities."

"People ask me the role of the church. The truth is that the church has no positive role. It has been individuals within the church."

"There are a great many people who would like to have spoken out all these years, but they have been just too frightened, too terrorized all these years. Now there is the law. They say we are on the side of the law."

Kate Smith Joins Catholic Church

LAKE PLACID, N.Y. (AP)—Singer Kate Smith, 56, has become a Roman Catholic, the New York Journal-American reported yesterday.

The account said she was baptized at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church here July 23 by the Rev. Albert G. Salmon of Glenfield, the same priest who administered last rites for Ted Collins, Miss Smith's manager for more than 30 years. Collins died of a heart attack May 27, 1964.

Although born of a Catholic father, Miss Smith had not practiced Catholicism until she began taking instruction in the faith last year. Her mother was a Presbyterian, Miss Smith maintains a residence here.

ORDERED TO QUIT

ROME (AP)—Premier Aldo